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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025

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July 19, 2005

J. KEITH KENNEDY, STAFF DIRECTOR  
 TERENCE E. SAUVAIN, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

Honorable Gordon England  
 Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense  
 1010 Defense Pentagon  
 Washington, DC 20301-1010

Dear Mr. Secretary:

It is clear to me that there was a complete disregard for the impact of the Eielson Air Force Base BRAC recommendation on joint training and readiness. Under the proposal, all A-10 aircraft assigned to Eielson will be realigned to installations in the southeastern United States – primarily Moody AFB. If the recommendation is implemented, the majority of A-10 aircraft in inventory will be stationed east of the Mississippi River. This would leave Army units in the Pacific Theater with inadequate resources to conduct close air support training in a joint environment, which is critical to current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Air Force makes absolute no sense in their decision to eliminate A-10's in Alaska at a time when the Army's presence in the state is growing. The new Stryker Brigade at Fort Wainwright and the new Airborne Brigade at Fort Richardson, along with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Air Support Operation Squadron (ASOS), train with Eielson's A-10 aircraft on the Alaska ranges everyday. The 3<sup>rd</sup> ASOS is an Air Force squadron stationed at Fort Wainwright, embedded in the Stryker Brigade. Their only mission is to coordinate close air support. The absence of A-10 aircraft in the region will certainly degrade their readiness.

Eielson's range complex, which covers over 63,000 square miles, is the largest overland instrumented training range in the world. Major General Gary Heckman, in his sworn testimony to the BRAC Commission on May 17, described Eielson's ranges as "superb airspace and training areas," and "magnificent." These are the ranges used on a daily basis by the A-10's at Eielson. Daily Training. Joint Training. Year-round.

Finally, the primary mission of the A-10 aircraft stationed at Eielson is to reinforce our units on the Korean peninsula and the Taiwan Straits. Considering our plans to reduce the number of Army aircraft and ground troops in Korea, this mission is of even greater strategic value and importance. These aircraft are critical to defeating any enemy offensive and removing them will significantly increase response time to any contingency. I strongly urge you to review the Commander, United States Pacific Command memo, dated 9 December 2004, to the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff which responds to potential Air Force BRAC recommendations.

OSD 14068-05

The Honorable Gordon England  
July 19, 2005  
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Please review and respond to this matter. The Air Force recommendation for A-10's at Eielson grossly undervalues the loss of joint training opportunities and the resulting loss of combat capability, particularly for the United States Army in Alaska. We must ensure A-10's remain at Eielson. Do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance.

With best wishes,

Cordially,



TED STEVENS  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Defense

cc:  
The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld  
The Honorable Michael W. Wynne